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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Jerzy Z. HOLZER (Poland)

Chapter IV. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

1. The Population Commission considered item 5 of its agenda at its 446th, 447th and 448th meetings on 28 February and 1 March 1991. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on progress of work in the field of population, 1989-1990: Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (E/CN.9/1991/3);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on progress of work in the field of population, 1989-1990: Department of Technical Cooperation for Development (E/CN.9/1991/3/Add.1);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work in the field of population for the biennium 1992-1993 (E/CN.9/1991/4);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on requirements for population specialists in national institutions and international organizations (E/CN.9/1991/5).

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2. The summary reports and recommendations of the following meetings were made available to the Commission: Expert Group Meeting on International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrants, San Miniato, Italy, 27-30 March 1990 (ESA/P/WP.111); Expert Group Meeting on Population Growth and Policies in Mega-cities, Tokyo, 22-26 October 1990 (ESA/P/WP.112); International Conference on the Aging Family, Kitakyushu, 15-19 October 1990 (ESA/P/WP.113); Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the Population Information Network (POPIN), New York, 11-14 June 1990 (ESA/P/WP.115); and Symposium on Integrating Population Variables into Development Planning, Riga, 4-8 December 1989 (ESA/P/WP.117). Also made available to the Commission was a report entitled "The global Population Information Network (POPIN): historical perspective and recommendations for the future" (ESA/P/WP.116) and the report of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Working Group on Demographic Estimates and Projections of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, New York, 6 to 8 June 1990 (ACC/1990/PG/4).

3. In its general debate on programme questions, the Commission was provided with information concerning the new structural organization of the population programme within the 1992-1997 medium-term plan and the use of new categories to classify and report outputs. The Commission was also notified that work had already begun in preparation for an international meeting on population, in order to prepare document E/1991/5. This included initial planning of preparatory expert group meetings to be organized, subject to the approval of the Commission acting as Preparatory Committee (see document E/CONF.84/PC/2).

A. Programme performance and implementation

1. Analysis of demographic variables at world level

4. The Commission noted with satisfaction the publication of the Step-by-Step Guide to the Estimation of Child Mortality 1/ and its growing use in developing countries. Delegates commended the preparation of computer programs on diskette to facilitate the dissemination and use of estimation techniques. They noted that the methods described in manuals prepared by the Population Division had contributed to improving the demographic estimates used in development planning.

5. The Commission was informed that a study entitled Child Mortality in Developing Countries: Socio-economic Differentials, Trends and Implications, 2/ had been completed and that two other studies focusing on child mortality were under way: one on the impact of changes in reproductive behaviour on child survival and another documenting the pace of mortality change since 1960. The Commission endorsed such activities and added that trends and patterns of adult mortality deserved more attention. In particular, a study of mortality at older ages, including trends in causes of death, was suggested.

6. The Commission took note of the progress made in organizing the Expert Group Meeting on the feminization of internal migration and of the completion of a project on the estimation of demographic components of urban growth. Estimates of rural-to-urban migration by sex resulting from that project were being used to prepare a paper for the Meeting dealing with female internal migration. While

endorsing that activity, the Commission noted that more attention should also be given to the study of other demographic, economic and social aspects of internal migration.

7. The Commission was informed that a database on urban structure, by city size, on the basis of census information had been completed for all Latin American countries. In addition, the expansion and computerization of the data bank on international migration had continued. As suggested by some delegates, the data bank was being used to explore different aspects of international migration as, for instance, trends in South-to-North migration. The Commission was pleased to learn that a paper on that topic had been prepared and would be published in a forthcoming issue of the Population Bulletin of the United Nations.

8. The Commission endorsed the activities carried out in the area of international migration, including the publication of the chart entitled World Migrant Populations: The Foreign-born 3/ and the Expert Group Meeting on International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrants. Delegates emphasized the growing importance of international migration world wide and the need for reliable information on levels and trends of international migration. Continued cooperation between the Population Division and other international organizations working in the field of migration was welcomed. Consideration of the interplay between population growth, labour needs, economic development and international migration was suggested. The need to focus on refugees and other forced migration movements, an issue of particular importance for developing countries, was emphasized.

9. The Commission was informed that the project on adolescent fertility was completed in 1989 with the publication of the study entitled Adolescent Reproductive Behaviour: Evidence from Developing Countries. 4/ The study was actually the second part of the project. The first part, which was devoted to developed countries, was published in 1988. By-products included an extensive bibliography published as a working paper and also on microfiche. The study dealt with fertility levels and trends in the ages of adolescence, sexual activity, contraceptive practice, pregnancy and abortion, and the health consequences of early child-bearing. The project was carried out with the collaboration of the United Nations Statistical Office, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and with the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

10. In the area of family planning and its demographic impact, the study on Levels and Trends of Contraceptive Use as Assessed in 1988 5/ was also published in 1989. It presented information on contraceptive use by type of method for all countries for which information was available. The report also gave estimates of the increase in contraceptive practice that would be needed to produce the decline in fertility as implied in the United Nations projections. With financial support from UNFPA, the data included in the report had since been entered in a family planning data bank, which would be made available in machine-readable form.

11. It was noted that the papers of the Expert Group Meeting on Measuring the Dynamics of Contraceptive Use, held in December 1988, had been published under the

title Measuring the Dynamics of Contraceptive Use: Proceedings of the United Nations Expert Group, New York, 5-7 December 1989 (ST/ESA/SER.R/106). Follow-up activities to that project included preparation of software to facilitate application of the techniques discussed in the publication.

12. The Population Division had also completed a study on patterns of marriage among women and men in different parts of the world with the recent publication of the volume entitled Patterns of First Marriage: Timing and Prevalence (ST/ESA/SER.R/111), which provided a global review of the socio-cultural factors involved. The publication was the second part of the study on first marriage carried out by the Population Division.

13. Also concluded during the biennium 1988-1989 was a study on the impact of differentials in socio-economic factors on fertility levels in 32 developing countries. The findings were published in 1990 in an article entitled "Correlates of fertility in selected developing countries" in the Population Bulletin of the United Nations, No. 28. 6/

14. The Commission was informed that a number of studies in the general area of the condition of women and population dynamics, with focus on fertility, were in progress. In one study, an analysis was undertaken of women's marital and economic status in relation to living arrangements of the women and their children. Work was also under way on a study of the changing relationships between fertility and women's education and labour force participation in developing countries. The project included a few country case studies focusing on fertility in relation to aspects of women's status, such as channels through which education might affect fertility and how events in women's life course might affect fertility transition. Two studies, on India and Mexico, respectively, were currently being carried out.

15. In the area of interrelations between fertility and mortality, work was in progress, with UNFPA support, on a small number of country case studies dealing with the implications of improved child survival for fertility. The methodological framework for the project was developed with the help of a group of experts. The case studies pertained to Ecuador, Indonesia and an African country.

16. It was also to be noted that the Population Division is currently undertaking a study of fertility behaviour in low-fertility settings, namely, the developed countries and the low-fertility countries of Eastern Asia. The study covered the patterns of decline, changes in age-patterns of fertility and in age-parity timing and, through comparative analysis, changes in the determinants of fertility as well.

2. World population projections

17. The Commission expressed great satisfaction that the 1990 revision of the twelfth round of global estimates and projections of populations had been completed and that the results had been published in the United Nations World Population Chart 1990, 7/ World Population Prospects 1990 8/ and The Sex and Age Distributions of Populations: The 1990 Revision. 9/ Prior to publication, the results were disseminated in the form of computer output and on magnetic media. The Commission

noted that for the first time the revision contained a description of data sources and of demographic methods used for each country, and that a comparison with the 1988 revision was included. The Commission was informed that the 1992 round of revision was under way.

18. The Commission expressed pleasure with the completion of the 1990 revision of global estimates and projections of urban and rural populations and populations of large urban agglomerations with 1 million inhabitants and over. It noted that the results had already been made available to users and that it was particularly pleased with the publication, for the first time, of the United Nations Urban Agglomeration Chart 1990. 10/ It was informed that the publication World Urbanization Prospects 1990 11/ would become available around mid-1991.

19. The Commission noted with pleasure that the results of the 1990 revision were more readily available to users with the addition of timely new wall charts and microcomputer diskettes as well as through ad hoc information services. The publication was noted of an improved version of the United Nations Population Projection Computer Program (ST/ESA/SER.R/92).

20. The Commission noted the publication in 1989 of Review of Recent National Demographic Target-Setting. 12/

21. The Commission was pleased to be informed that the manuscript on subnational population projections was now undergoing final editing. The publication had been recast to concentrate on the most difficult problem facing those who wish to undertake subnational population projections; that is, the estimation of baseline migration, by sex and age, for subnational areas.

22. The Commission was informed that a new revision of the long-range projections of population was currently under way. It discussed the pros and cons of such long-range projections within the context of other supplementary projections that might be useful.

23. The Commission regretted that lack of resources had not allowed the resumption of estimates and projections of households and families, but took note of related work in this area within other subprogrammes and by the Statistical Office.

3. Population policy and socio-economic development

24. The Commission noted with satisfaction that, in the important area of population policy, a great deal of research and work had been completed during the last few years. This work encompassed (a) comparative studies of new population policy issues at the global level; (b) national population policies; and (c) the population policy data bank.

25. Concerning the comparative studies, the Commission was informed that research had continued on policy issues resulting from rapid population growth of the largest metropolitan areas in developing countries. During the past two years, mega-city studies had been issued for Jakarta, Cairo and Mexico City, bringing the total number of mega-city reports issued to 12.

26. In addition, the Commission was pleased to note that the Population Division, in cooperation with the United Nations University, had organized the Symposium on Mega-Cities and the Future: Population Growth and Policy Responses, which was held in Tokyo in October 1990.

27. Regarding national population policies, the Commission noted with satisfaction that the three-volume series, World Population Policies, 13/ had been completed and a professional journal for librarians had included it in its 1990 list of Outstanding Academic Books. Additional attention to the experiences of countries in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies was the focus of the series entitled Case Studies in Population Policy, the most recent of which were on France (ST/ESA/SER.R/94) and Haiti (ST/ESA/SER.R/95).

28. The Commission was also informed that in April 1989, the Expert Group Meeting on Population and Human Rights was organized by the Population Division in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights of the United Nations Office at Geneva.

29. The Commission was informed that a project on the status of women and population policies, with a focus on policies relating to reproductive health, was initiated in 1990 with the financial support of UNFPA.

30. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the population policy data bank had been expanded and considerably strengthened since its twenty-fifth session. It was informed that the second edition of the report and computer diskette entitled Global Population Policy Database (ST/ESA/SER.R/99), was issued in 1990.

31. The Commission was also informed that the Results of the Sixth United Nations Population Inquiry among Governments (ST/ESA/SER.R/104) had been published.

32. The Commission was pleased to note that the report, recommendations and papers of the 1988 Expert Group Meeting on the International Transmission of Population Policy Experience, which was organized jointly by the Population Division and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), had been published recently in a volume entitled International Transmission of Population Policy Experience (ST/ESA/SER.R/108), which was now being widely distributed. In response to a recommendation of that Meeting, the Population Division had recently issued a publication entitled Trends in Population Policy, 14/ which for the first time provided longitudinal national policy data for 170 countries for seven points in time over the period 1974-1989.

33. The Commission was informed that two publications had been produced as a follow-up of the project on socio-economic development and fertility decline. The Commission was also informed that the reports of case studies on the socio-economic consequences of population aging in Argentina, Morocco and the State of Kerala (India) had been completed and had been submitted for publication.

34. The Commission noted that a new edition of Stable Age Distributions Corresponding to the New United Nations Model Life Tables for Developing Countries (ST/ESA/SER.R/98) had been published. The Commission suggested that it would be

useful to learn of the impact that the dissemination of such methods had on the planning process. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the Population Division had upgraded the MORTPAK and MORTPAK-LITE software packages, making them more useful for planning by including a model for making single-year projections. It noted that MORTPAK-LITE had an improved user interface. It also noted that a revised manual for the upgraded versions of MORTPAK and MORTPAK-LITE had been published. 15/

35. Recognizing the interrelated nature of trends in family structure and trends in the aging of populations, the Commission expressed its satisfaction that the Population Division, with the support of the municipal government of Kitakyushu, Japan, had organized an International Conference on Aging Populations in the Context of the Family. The Commission stressed the importance of considering family issues when analysing the impact of demographic trends, including aging.

36. The Commission noted with satisfaction that volume I of the manual entitled Projection Methods for Integrating Population Variables into Development Planning had been prepared in three modules (ST/ESA/SER.R/90 and Add.1 and 2), the first two of which had been published. The third module was in press. The Commission stressed the importance of expediting the finalization and publication of volume II of the manual dealing with sectoral planning.

37. The Commission noted that reports on experiences of integrating population variables into development planning in India, Mexico, Thailand and Turkey had been finalized for publication.

38. The Commission was informed that with the financial support of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Population Division, in collaboration with the Population Branch of the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, the Latvian State University and the Programme in Population and Development Planning in Moscow State University, organized an International Symposium on Population and Development Planning, which was held at Riga in 1989.

39. The Commission noted that the Population Division had prepared and disseminated in diskette form version 1.0 of a microcomputer-oriented database on population, resources, environment and development called the PRED BANK. The database included demographic and economic variables and could be used with several widely available software packages. The user's manual was contained in an accompanying diskette.

4. Monitoring, review and appraisal, coordination and dissemination of population information

40. The monitoring of world population trends and policies and review and appraisal of progress made towards the implementation of the World Population Plan of Action are discussed in chapter II.

41. The Population Commission was pleased to be informed that the Population Division and the WHO Global Programme on AIDS had jointly organized a workshop on

modelling the demographic impact of AIDS in pattern II countries: that is, countries where most cases of AIDS occur through heterosexual transmission and through mother-to-infant transmission. Among the purposes of the Workshop were to examine the differences among various modelling approaches and learn to what extent such modelling exercises could provide useful information on the pandemic's potential medium- and long-term demographic effects. Among the findings were that (a) a projected demographic impact depended mainly on assumed rates of ineffectivity and patterns of sexual behaviour, the two variables about which there had been least knowledge; and (b) a general demographic impact at the national level might not be as great as hypothesized, although possibly very extensive in certain capital cities or other urban areas where infection was pervasive. The proceedings of the Workshop were in press and would be issued before the end of 1991. The Commission was pleased to learn the Population Division was initiating a new project on national AIDS policies. The Commission noted that such work was important for the biennial revision of global population estimates and projections.

42. The Population Commission noted with satisfaction that in the overall dissemination programme of the Population Division, 33 major publications were issued during the biennium 1989-1990, including four issues of the Population Bulletin and of the Population Newsletter. Three wall charts, which appeared to be a useful format for bringing population information to wide audiences quickly and at a comparatively low cost, had been published. It was reported that the demand for the publications remained strong, that there had been an overall reduction in publication time and that changes in appearance and format of some series had made the publications more attractive to a wider audience. Also, more of the Population Division's outputs had been made available in a computer-usable format. As an effort to enhance dissemination, the standard practice of issuing a press release upon the issue of a new publication had been adopted.

43. The Commission was pleased to learn that during the past two years, the substantive activities of the global Population Information Network (POPIN) continued to be carried out at a comparatively routine (low) level. The activities included: an exhibit of population information resources at the 1989 General Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) in New Delhi; organization and servicing of the POPIN Working Group on the Management of the POPIN Thesaurus in late 1989, under the leadership of the Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography (CICRED); organization and servicing of the global POPIN Coordinating Committee Meeting to take place in New York in mid-1990; participation in the POPIN-Africa Advisory Committee meeting in Accra in 1990 and in the International Seminar on Population Information convened by the China Population Information and Research Centre in Beijing in 1990. An overall review of POPIN activities was prepared by a consultant and made available to the Commission in working paper ESA/P/WP.116.

44. With respect to the management of global POPIN, as a result of further review of the POPIN project, it was agreed between the Population Division and UNFPA that the responsibility for global POPIN would remain with the Population Division with the support of UNFPA.

5. Technical cooperation

45. The Commission was informed of the technical cooperation activities in population undertaken by the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development during 1988-1990 in the field of training in demography and population and development, evaluation and analysis of basic population data and population policy and development planning. The Commission expressed its support for those activities and noted with satisfaction that the development of national capabilities had remained the main objective of technical cooperation in those fields. In this regard, the Commission noted that a number of countries, particularly but by no means exclusively in the African region, stood to benefit a great deal from this work, since human resource development in the population field remained a key concern.

46. A focus on developing further expertise in the area of population and development was particularly recommended by the Commission, as was careful consideration of the nature of the training required and the capability of institutions to provide it prior to finalizing decisions on actual training venues.

47. The Commission noted that an increase in national expertise during the biennium had reduced the dependence on international experts in project implementation in developing countries. It also noted, however, a decline in the proportion of women in training programmes. While it therefore welcomed the increased emphasis placed on the further involvement of women in all population activities, it also urged Governments and the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development to continue to ensure women's equal access to all relevant professional opportunities, particularly in training. It was pointed out that while nominations of women candidates for short-term training activities had progressively increased, this had not happened with regard to long-term training, the reasons for which were unclear.

48. The Commission welcomed the increased emphasis by Governments on exchanging experiences and technical cooperation among developing countries in training. It noted the needs expressed by most Governments of developing countries for training of more population specialists to attend to the growing needs in population policy formulation and integration of population variables into development planning.

49. With respect to the report prepared on requirements for population specialists in national institutions, the Commission considered the study to have far-reaching significance and recommended that further in-depth research of that kind should be undertaken, if possible. Such a study should include a larger number of countries, a broader scope of inquiry and, in particular, some focus on the question of how many population specialists were actually continuing to work in their areas of training. This would cast new light on the continuing problem of "brain drain" and also help to quantify just how well self-reliance in this area has developed.

50. The Commission noted with satisfaction the collaboration between the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development, Governments and national institutions in giving short-term specialized training to nationals of developing countries.

51. The Commission expressed support for the increasing use made of national consultants and experts in the analysis of population and census data and the dissemination of the results through pre- and post-census seminars and publication of reports. The Commission noted the extensive use made of microcomputers in census analysis for which a large number of software packages had continued to be distributed through the Department's software development project.

52. The Commission noted that many developing countries had formulated population policies and developed programmes to integrate population variables into development planning. The Commission was informed of the extensive use made of techniques developed by the United Nations for integrating population factors into development planning. It noted in this regard that the Department had developed an integrated macro-simulation model for population policy formulation and integrating population factors into development, and a women-in-development model to analyse the impact of women's productive role in socio-economic development. The Commission was informed that the Department had organized training seminars in a number of developing countries on application of these models. The Commission urged the Department to increase its efforts in this area, to include demographic impacts on the environment and the use of microcomputer technology to model population and development planning as well as women in development interrelationships.

53. The Commission was informed that the Department had published a report on the in-depth analysis of United Nations fellowships and another report on the Consultative Meeting on Substantive Issues of Demographic Training in its programme of analysis and evaluation of experiences in technical cooperation in demographic training and research. The Commission expressed satisfaction with the quality of the technical assistance provided to the developing countries, and the Department was urged to continue its excellent cooperation in this regard with Governments and national institutions.

54. The Commission was also advised that the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development continues to offer cooperation to UNFPA in providing the services of technical advisers for UNFPA's Basic Needs Assessment missions as well as in project formulations and evaluations.

6. Demographic and social statistics

55. The Commission was informed of the work of the Statistical Office of the Secretariat in demographic and social statistics, covering three major components: (a) population census preparations and methodological developments; (b) international data collection, compilation and dissemination; and (c) technical cooperation activities. It expressed satisfaction with the extensive census preparations (such as regional workshops) and publications for assistance to countries. Recent publications included Supplementary Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses; Manual on Population Census Data Processing Using Microcomputers; and the Handbook of Vital Statistics Systems and Methods. The Commission was informed that 128 countries had already conducted a population census within the 1990 round of censuses and 50 more countries plan to hold a census in 1991.

56. The Commission noted with satisfaction that the publications of the annual Demographic Yearbook and of the quarterly Population and Vital Statistics Report had continued on a regular basis and had included, as special topics, households and families, and international migration. It was informed of the three-year project funded by UNFPA to develop a Demographic Yearbook database and to bring out a special supplement on population aging.

57. Work in social statistics included, inter alia, a wall chart on early child development and learning achievement, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO and UNESCO, in the context of the World Summit for Children held in September 1990; another wall chart on the situation of women in 1990 and the first issue of the Disability Statistics Compendium.

58. In the area of technical cooperation, the Statistical Office had provided substantive support to about 180 projects executed by the Department of Technical Cooperation for Development over the past five years in the areas of population and housing censuses and surveys, civil registration and vital statistics, special population groups, women etc. Most of those projects had been funded by UNFPA. The Commission welcomed the International Programme for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems which was designed to encourage countries to undertake actions to remove the constraints and problems that impeded the development of the national civil registration and vital statistics systems.

59. The Commission welcomed the preparation of population and housing census handbooks and other reports and urged that they be published well in advance of the next census round and distributed widely to countries. The Commission noted with pleasure the close collaboration among the various offices of the United Nations system, in particular, between the Statistical Office and the Population Division in the area of demographic and social statistics.

Notes

1/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.9.

2/ United Nations publication, forthcoming.

3/ United Nations publication, Sales. No. E.89.XIII.70.

4/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.10.

5/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.4.

6/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.3.

7/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.4/Rev.

8/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XIII.4.

9/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.33.

Notes (continued)

10/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.6.

11/ United Nations publication, forthcoming.

12/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.5.

13/ United Nations publication, Sales Nos. E.87.XIII.4, E.89.XIII.3 and E.90.XIII.2.

14/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.XIII.13.

15/ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XIII.7.